



Breast

Awareness: October 2024

What is Breast Cancer Awareness Month? All You Need to Know

Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer in the UK, with over 55,000 new cases reported each year and approximately 11,500 deaths annually¹. While 76% of those diagnosed survive at least 10 years², recent figures suggest that at least 23% of cases are preventable through early screening¹.

Importantly, breast cancer doesn't only affect women; about 400 men are diagnosed each year in the UK. However, men are often diagnosed around 10 years later than women, underscoring the importance of early screening for everyone³.



Why Breast Cancer Awareness Month Matters

First introduced in 1985, Breast Cancer Awareness Month runs every October with the initial aim of encouraging breast cancer screening and educating the public about early detection. Today, it also encompasses fundraising for vital research through various charities. Despite numerous awareness campaigns, there are still critical points that everyone—men and women alike—need to understand:

- **Early Detection:** Early detection significantly impacts survival rates and quality of life. It's crucial for everyone to be "breast aware" and understand what is normal for them.
- **Accessibility of Screening:** In the UK, breast screening is currently offered to all women registered with a GP every three years between the age of 50 and 70. There is some evidence to suggest that screening from age 40 can be beneficial, especially for those with a family history of breast cancer¹.

While some people have easy access to breast cancer screening, others face barriers such as cost, time constraints, and anxiety around the process. Overcoming these barriers is essential for widespread early detection.

- **Effective Treatment:** Under the care of an experienced specialist, breast cancer treatment can be highly effective, especially when symptoms are detected early.
- **Improved Quality of Life:** Early detection and treatment can lead to a significantly improved quality of life, offering many healthy years ahead.



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The Importance of Early Screening

Most cancers start symptomless, and breast cancer that goes undetected for years can drastically reduce your chances of recovery which is why it is important to get screened, before you have any symptoms and are generally fit and healthy.

At least 1 in 7 women in the UK will develop breast cancer during their lifetime. Risk factors include age, activity level, family history, alcohol and diet, and environmental exposure to chemicals. Importantly, your BMI (body mass index) can be a risk factor. While some factors are beyond your control, early screening remains the best course of action.

Overcoming Screening Reluctance

Many people avoid screening due to fear, embarrassment, or busy schedules. Earlier this year it was reported that 35.4% of women didn't attend their potentially life-saving breast screening appointments following an invitation by the NHS⁴.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month provides an excellent opportunity to overcome any fears and to educate yourself about the importance of screening.

Avoiding screening, particularly if you're at higher risk due to factors such as being overweight, family history, smoking, or drinking, can have serious consequences.

Check4Cancer Makes Screening Easy

At Check4Cancer, we've simplified cancer screening for individuals and corporate team members alike.

So, whether you want to undergo breast cancer screening on your own or offer it as a benefit to your employees, Check4Cancer offers evidence-based, clinically validated, strongly governed, fast and reliable screens and checks.

¹ <https://www.breastcanceruk.org.uk/about-breast-cancer/facts-figures-and-qas/facts-and-figures>

² <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics/statistics-by-cancer-type/breast-cancer>

³ <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics/statistics-by-cancer-type/breast-cancer>

⁴ <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/breast-screening-programme/england-2022-23>

Because it's always better to know...

Take proactive steps towards your health today. Don't wait—schedule your screening and safeguard your future.



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